



PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

Submission of Information Collections for OMB Review; Comment Request;

Multiemployer Plan Regulations

AGENCY: Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

ACTION: Notice of request for extension of OMB approval of information collections.

SUMMARY: The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) is requesting that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) extend approval, under the Paperwork Reduction Act, of collections of information in PBGC's regulations on multiemployer plans under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). This notice informs the public of PBGC's request and solicits public comment on the collections of information.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]**.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collections should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find these particular information collections by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function. All comments received will be posted without change to PBGC's website, <http://www.pbgc.gov>, including any personal information provided. Do not submit comments that include any personally identifiable information or confidential business information.

A copy of the request will be posted on PBGC's web site at <https://www.pbgc.gov/prac/laws-and-regulation/federal-register-notices-open-for-comment>. It may also be obtained without charge by writing to the Disclosure Division of the Office of the General Counsel of PBGC, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024-2101, or, calling 202-229-4040 during normal business hours. If you are deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hilary Duke (duke.hilary@pbgc.gov), Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Office of the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024–2101; 202–229–3839. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OMB has approved and issued control numbers for seven collections of information in PBGC’s regulations relating to multiemployer plans. These collections of information are described below. OMB approvals for these collections of information expire June 30, 2023. On January 5, 2023, PBGC published in the *Federal Register* (at 88 FR 888) a notice informing the public of its intent to request an extension of these collections of information. No comments were received. PBGC is requesting that OMB extend its approval of these collections of information for 3 years. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

1. Extension of Special Withdrawal Liability Rules (29 CFR Part 4203) (OMB Control Number 1212–0023)

Sections 4203(f) and 4208(e)(3) of ERISA allow PBGC to permit a multiemployer plan to adopt special rules for determining whether a withdrawal from the plan has occurred, subject to PBGC approval.

The regulation specifies the information that a plan that adopts special rules must submit to PBGC about the rules, the plan, and the industry in which the plan operates. PBGC uses the information to determine whether the rules are appropriate for the industry in which the plan functions and do not pose a significant risk to the insurance system.

PBGC estimates that at most one plan sponsor submits a request each year under this regulation. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 4 hours and \$10,000.

2. Variances for Sale of Assets (29 CFR Part 4204) (OMB Control Number 1212–0021)

If an employer's covered operations or contribution obligation under a plan ceases, the employer must generally pay withdrawal liability to the plan. Section 4204 of ERISA provides an exception, under certain conditions, where the cessation results from a sale of assets. Among other things, the buyer must furnish a bond or escrow, and the sale contract must provide for secondary liability of the seller.

The regulation establishes general variances (rules for avoiding the bond/escrow and sale-contract requirements) and authorizes plans to determine whether the variances apply in particular cases. It also allows buyers and sellers to request individual variances from PBGC. Plans and PBGC use the information to determine whether employers qualify for variances.

PBGC estimates that each year, 100 employers submit, and 100 plans respond to, variance requests under the regulation, and 1 employer submits a variance request to PBGC. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 1,050 hours and \$501,000.

3. Reduction or Waiver of Complete Withdrawal Liability (29 CFR Part 4207) (OMB Control Number 1212–0044)

Section 4207 of ERISA allows PBGC to provide for abatement of an employer's complete withdrawal liability, and for plan adoption of alternative abatement rules, where appropriate.

Under the regulation, an employer applies to a plan for an abatement determination, providing information the plan needs to determine whether withdrawal liability should be abated, and the plan notifies the employer of its determination. The employer may, pending plan action, furnish a bond or escrow instead of making withdrawal liability payments, and must notify the plan if it does so. When the plan then makes its determination, it must so notify the bonding or escrow agent.

The regulation also permits a plan to adopt its own abatement rules and request PBGC approval. PBGC uses the information in such a request to determine whether the amendment should be approved.

PBGC estimates that each year at most 1 employer submits and 1 plan responds to an application for abatement of complete withdrawal liability, and no plan sponsors request approval of plan abatement rules from PBGC. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 0.5 hours and \$1,000.

4. Reduction or Waiver of Partial Withdrawal Liability (29 CFR Part 4208) (OMB Control Number 1212-0039)

Section 4208 of ERISA provides for abatement, in certain circumstances, of an employer's partial withdrawal liability and authorizes PBGC to issue additional partial withdrawal liability abatement rules.

Under the regulation, an employer applies to a plan for an abatement determination, providing information the plan needs to determine whether withdrawal liability should be abated, and the plan notifies the employer of its determination. The employer may, pending plan action, furnish a bond or escrow instead of making withdrawal liability payments, and must notify the plan if it does so. When the plan then makes its determination, it must so notify the bonding or escrow agent.

The regulation also permits a plan to adopt its own abatement rules and request PBGC approval. PBGC uses the information in such a request to determine whether the amendment should be approved.

PBGC estimates that each year at most 1 employer submits and 1 plan responds to an application for abatement of partial withdrawal liability, and no plan sponsors request approval of plan abatement rules from PBGC. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 0.50 hours and \$1,000.

5. Allocating Unfunded Vested Benefits to Withdrawing Employers (29 CFR Part 4211) (OMB Control Number 1212–0035)

Section 4211(c)(5)(A) of ERISA requires PBGC to prescribe how plans can, with PBGC approval, change the way they allocate unfunded vested benefits to withdrawing employers for purposes of calculating withdrawal liability.

The regulation prescribes the information that must be submitted to PBGC by a plan seeking such approval. PBGC uses the information to determine how the amendment changes the way the plan allocates unfunded vested benefits and how the amendment will affect the risk of loss to plan participants and PBGC.

PBGC estimates that 10 plan sponsors submit approval requests each year under this regulation. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 200 hours and \$200,000.

6. Notice, Collection, and Redetermination of Withdrawal Liability (29 CFR Part 4219) (OMB Control Number 1212–0034)

Section 4219(c)(1)(D) of ERISA requires that PBGC prescribe regulations for the allocation of a plan’s total unfunded vested benefits in the event of a “mass withdrawal.” Section 4209(c) of ERISA deals with an employer’s liability for de minimis amounts if the employer withdraws in a “substantial withdrawal.”

The reporting requirements in the regulation give employers notice of a mass withdrawal or substantial withdrawal and advise them of their rights and liabilities. They also provide notice to PBGC so that it can monitor the plan, and they help PBGC assess the possible impact of a withdrawal event on participants and the multiemployer plan insurance program.

PBGC estimates that there are 6 mass withdrawals and 3 substantial withdrawals per year. The plan sponsor of a plan subject to a withdrawal covered by the regulation provides notices of the withdrawal to PBGC and to employers covered by the plan, liability assessments to the employers, and a certification to PBGC that assessments have been made. (For a mass

withdrawal, there are 2 assessments and 2 certifications that deal with 2 different types of liability. For a substantial withdrawal, there is 1 assessment and 1 certification (combined with the withdrawal notice to PBGC).) The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 15 hours and \$49,500.

7. Procedures for PBGC Approval of Plan Amendments (29 CFR Part 4220) (OMB Control Number 1212-0031)

Under section 4220 of ERISA, a plan may within certain limits adopt special plan rules regarding when a withdrawal from the plan occurs and how the withdrawing employer's withdrawal liability is determined. Any such special rule is effective only if, within 90 days after receiving notice and a copy of the rule, PBGC either approves or fails to disapprove the rule.

The regulation provides rules for requesting PBGC's approval of an amendment. PBGC needs the required information to identify the plan; evaluate the risk of loss, if any, posed by the plan amendment; and determine whether to approve or disapprove the amendment.

PBGC estimates that at most 1 plan sponsor submits an approval request per year under this regulation. The estimated annual burden of the collection of information is 2 hours and \$7,000 dollars.

Issued in Washington, DC, by

Hilary Duke,

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Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.